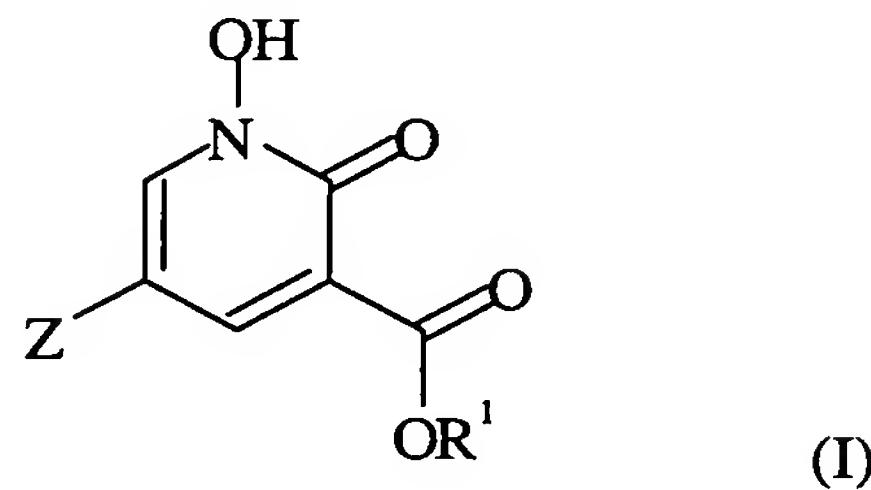


**Abstract**

The present invention relates to pyridinone derivatives of formula (I):



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wherein Z represents C<sub>2-6</sub> alkynyl, aryl or heteroaryl, any of which groups may be optionally substituted, and R<sup>1</sup> represents hydrogen, C<sub>1-6</sub> alkyl,

C<sub>3-7</sub> heterocycloalkyl(C<sub>1-6</sub>)alkyl, di(C<sub>1-6</sub>)alkylamino(C<sub>1-6</sub>)alkyl,

10 C<sub>2-6</sub> alkylcarbonyloxy(C<sub>1-6</sub>)alkyl or C<sub>3-7</sub> cycloalkoxycarbonyloxy(C<sub>1-6</sub>)alkyl, and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof, useful in the prevention and treatment of hepatitis C virus infections.